

Other Diviners Besides the sanjinsoo there are several other types of diviners, such as palmists, physiognomists, and card readers. Some of these combine prayer and supposed reliance upon supernatural powers with their science. For example in Ishikawa there is a young woman who is referred to as a kaminchi-gwaa or yuta-gwaa, though neither term is very apt. She is consulted about the character and future of individual persons. Her performance consists of asking the birth year of the person in question, praying, and then dealing out a fortune from a pack of playing cards of an archaic type. She charges ¥30 for each person inquired about. As with the true yuta illness may be a matter on which she is consulted. 791 [89]

Like the sanjinsoo, these persons are found mainly in the larger towns and cities, where it appears that they manage to make a living. Whatever the law reads on the matter the police and the public evidently regard these professions as legitimate as long as the practitioners are sincere in their work. There was a famous case in Ishikawa about 1951, however, where two young women set up an establishment as diviners. They are said to have given advice free to the needy at first and built up a large clientele, whereupon they began overcharging their wealthier customers and spending the money on riotous living. Finally the police put a stop to their activities, charging them with giving advice in an irresponsible manner. 791 689

The Yabuu The term yabuu seems to be derived from the Japanese 'yabu-isha', literally "bush-doctor", defined by the dictionary as "quack". The Japanese and English terms, however, reflect attitudes that are probably not associated with the Okinawan yabuu. The yabuu is a practitioner of 'Kampōi', "Chinese Medicine", a term that was once coordinate with 'Rampōi' "Dutch Medicine", that is, modern Western (and now modern Japanese) medicine. The methods of the yabuu include moxibustion, acupuncture, and the prescription of various foods. 759 179

Moxibustion (Japanese 'o-kyū') is the burning of 'mogusa' or "moxa" on the patient's flesh. On an occasion which I observed, a woman brought a child of two or three to be treated. The yabuu took out his charts of the body, which, he explained, showed where the nerves may be reached. The theory seems to be that the burning activates the nerves and causes the body to throw off the illness. In this case the child seemed to be suffering from some internal disorder. Its body bore the scars of previous treatment. The yabuu, after consulting his chart, painted four dots on the child's bare back with a red liquid. Then he wetted a finger and put on each dot a tiny bit of 'mogusa' and with a lighted punk lit each bit, let it burn down to the skin, and then tamped it out. His wife then wiped off the ashes, leaving a small black scar where each dot had been. He then burned six more spots on each side of the child's chest, four around the navel, one on each ankle and one on each wrist. Throughout the procedure the child cried and had to be restrained by its mother. The scars, however, are said not usually to be permanent. 759 759

Acupuncture consists of inserting into the flesh a long gold needle ('kimberī'), usually at the afflicted spot. It is used, for example, to relieve the stiffness of the hips associated with childbirth.